

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03912 051609Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 PC-01 AID-05
TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /084 W
-----114827 051635Z /46

R 051500Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8316
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CONFIDENTIAL PRETORIA 3912

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT SF RH
SUBJ: BOTH AND SMITH COMMENT ON LATEST MEETING

REF: PRETORIA 3610

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH SMITH IN SALISBURY, FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA SAID TIME WAS RUNNING OUT BUT THERE WAS STILL REAL POTENTIAL FOR A SETTLEMENT. BOTHA SAID HE WAS SATISFIED THAT IAN SMITH WAS SEEKING A PROPER SOLUTION, AND IN A DOMESTIC CONTEXT, HE APPEARED TO LEND POLITICAL SUPPORT TO SMITH. SMITH, BOTHA REVEALED, WOULD VISIT SOUTH AFRICA BEFORE THE AUG 31 ELECTIONS. SMITH TALKED OF AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND HE PROVIDED A SCENARIO LEADING TO ELECTIONS NEXT MARCH UNDER A NEW

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CONSTITUTION. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER HIS MEETING WITH IAN SMITH ON AUG 4, FONMIN BOTHA WAS QUOTED IN THE SA PRESS AS SAYING THAT TIME IS FAST RUNNING OUT IN RHODESIA, BUT THERE WAS CERTAINLY 'REAL POTENTIAL FOR A SETTLEMENT WHICH, IN MY OPINION, WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE OVERWHELMING

MAJORITY OF RHODESIANS, BOTH BLACK AND WHITE," THE FONMIN SIAD SOUTH AFRICA WAS "SATISFIED" THAT MR. SMITH WISHED TO ACHIEVE SUCH A SOLUTION. "WE HAVE GIVEN CERTAIN ASSURANCES," HE SIAD, "AS REGARDS MR. SMITH'S INTENTIONS TO THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN GOVTs, AND TO OTHERS. NOTHING HAS HAPPENED WHICH DETRACTS FROM THOSE ASSURANCES."

3. BOTHA SAID THAT RHODESIA AND SA HAD STATED THEY WOULD KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH AND HE PREDICTED FURTHER TOP LEVEL MEETINGS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. SPECIFICALLY, HE ENVISIONED A VISIT BY SMITH TO SOUTH AFRICA FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH HIMSELF AND POSSIBLY THE PRIMIN BEFORE THE END FO THE MONTH. BEFORE LEAVING SALISBURY, BOTHA WAS REPORTED AS ENDORSING SMITH AS "THE HEAD OF GOVT IN RHODESIA, THE ONLY LEADER WE KNOW."

4. MEANWHILE IN SALISBURY SMITH WAS QUOTED BY THE PRESS AS STATING THAT HE WAS SATISFIED HE HAD THE FULL BACKING AND TRUST OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVT IN GOING AHEAD WITH HIS PLANS FOR AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THE EXPRESSION "INTERNAL SETTLEMENT" WAS NOT A DIRECT QUOTE IN EITHER OF THE PRESS REPORTS FROM SALISBURY, ALTHOUGH BOTH CARRIED A SMILILAR REPORT OF THIS PHRASE. SMITH INDICATED THAT IN CALLING THE AUG 31 ELECTION, HIS AIM WAS A NEW CONSTITUTION BY THE END OF THE YEAR AND ELECTIONS BASED ON IT BY MARCH OF NEXT YEAR.

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5. COMMENT: ONE IMPORTANT PURPOSE OF BOTHA'S TRIP WAS TO underscore SOUTH AFRICA'S SUPPORT FOR SMITH, A SITUATION WHICH THE RHODESIAN LEADER IS FULLY EXPLOITING IN HIS ELECTION CAMPAIGN. SMITH IS INCREASINGLY TALKING IN TERMS OF AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THE SCENARIO INVOLVING ELECTIONS NEXT MARCH UNDER A NEW CONSTITUTION SUGGESTS THE COURSE THAT SMITH HAS MAPPED OUT.

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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